Cryptozoology, 2, 1983, 40–52
© 1983 International Society of Cryptozoology

THE MONGOLIAN ALMAS: A HISTORICAL REEVALUATION OF THE SIGHTING BY BARADIIN

MICHAEL HEANEY
Department of Catalogues, Bodleian Library, Oxford, England OX1 3BG, U.K.

ABSTRACT: Research into the Almas, a supposed man-like creature of Mongolia and Central Asia, is said to have begun when Badzar Baradiin saw one while on an expedition to Tibet in 1906. The sighting was said to have been reported to Tsyben Zhamtsarano, who thereupon began a long-term research study of the Almas. Examination of Zhamtsarano's archive in Leningrad, and in particular of Baradiin's unpublished expedition diaries, casts doubt on the accuracy of this version of events.

The Sasquatch and the Yeti are the most renowned of the various "man-like" creatures supposed to inhabit different regions of the Earth, but in many ways they are not at all man-like. All they apparently share with man is a bipedal gait and some indication of a primate ancestry. Other hirsute bipedal creatures which have been reported have a much better claim to be termed "man-like," and one of them, the Mongolian Almas, has been described in terms which suggest it is little different from man except in the possession of a hirsute body, and the lack of articulate speech and culture.

The possible existence of the Almas was first brought to the attention of the Western world in a systematic manner by the Commission for the Study of the Snowman Question of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in its *Information Bulletins,* published in 1958 and 1959 (Porshnev and Shmakov 1958). The Commission was established during the Abominable Snowman "flap" of the 1950's, largely at the instigation of Boris Fedorovich Porshnev, and the material in it relating to the Almas in Mongolia was collected by him mainly from information supplied by the Mongolian scholar Rinchen. Rinchen, stimulated by Porshnev's interest, published some of his own researches in September, 1958 (Rinchen 1958). Shortly afterwards, E. Vlček drew attention to some Oriental literary sources which appear to describe a hairy biped in Tibet and Mongolia (Vlček 1959). This was followed in 1960 by an article by G. Démentiev and D. Zevegmid reviewing the various travellers' tales about creatures resembling the Almas from the Middle Ages to the present day, and reporting on their own 1959 investigations (Démentiev and Zevegmid 1960). Four years later Rinchen published a further article (Rinchen 1964).

Most other authors have largely confined themselves to relating the evidence contained in the above works and in Porshnev's two major personal contributions to the literature, which will be discussed below. In 1964, Ivor Montagu published an English-language account of the history of and current

thinking on the subject (Montagu 1964). Much of this material was compiled yet again, with long extracts from Porshnev's works, by Odette Tchernine (1970), and Porshnev's last major work was incorporated, after his death, in French translation, in the book published by Heuvelmans under the title *L'Homme de Néanderthal est Toujours Vivant* (Heuvelmans and Porchnev 1974).

Little really new about the Almas in Mongolia has been published since the early 1960's, though further reports continue to trickle out. In 1981, Damdinzhavin Maidar, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Mongolian People's Republic, related that tracks had been found in 1973, and an encounter claimed in 1974 (Maidar 1981). Myra Shackley, a British archaeologist, has followed Porshnev in suggesting that Almases may, in fact, be the successors to Neanderthal man: she has had the opportunity to conduct archaeological research in Mongolia and interview the local population about the Almas (Shackley 1980, 1982). However, she modifies this view to some extent in her forthcoming book, *Wildman.*

The above survey of references to the Mongolian Almas has deliberately been cursory, and has not elaborated the details of the evidence claimed in support of the existence of the Almas, because I want to concentrate in these pages not on the Almas itself, but on a particular aspect of the history of the subject. Porshnev wrote two major treatises on the question of the existence of "relict hominoids," as he termed them. One of them, *The Current Position with Regard to Relict Hominoids,* was published by him in a very small edition in 1963 (Porshnev 1963). It is a consolidation and interpretation of the evidence presented in the Commission's *Information Bulletins.*

The other work, "The Struggle for *Troglodytidae,*" is a more popular account, not only covering much of the same material, but bringing the story of world-wide research up to date, and giving Porshnev's own attitude and reaction to many of the practical problems he had encountered in doing his research. It was issued in a general-interest journal published in Alma-Ata (Porshnev 1968). In many ways, it is his testament. As it gives Porshnev's final and most readable account of how he discovered the existence of research into the Almas, the relevant passages are reproduced here in detail (all translations are the author's):

> A small boy once asked me: "Aren't those Almases in [M. K.] Rozenfel'd's book *The Ravine of the Almases* connected with the Abominable Snowman?" The boy deserves all the credit. I flicked through the absurd fantasy story. There, among other things, is portrayed the figure of the Mongolian scholar [Tsyben] Zhamtsarano, who studied the mystery of the Almas. A fictional scholar? It transpired that some time earlier, in 1930, the same Rozenfel'd had published a collection of true reports, *By Car through Mongolia.* The same name cropped up in it—Professor Zhamtsarano. Rozenfel'd noted what he said about strange creatures—wild men, Almases—who live in Mongolia, according to a wealth of data collected by him from the populace, and according to a report of a personal observation by Professor [Badzar] Baradiin of St Petersburg, a Buryat Mongol by birth.

Being no Mongolian scholar, I still doubted the existence of Zhamtsarano and Baradiin, but the experts soon dispelled my ignorance. Professor Zhamtsarano was a scholar of world-wide reputation on Mongolian studies, and was the founder of a national scientific school.

How could I find his material in fuller form than in Rozenfel'd's literary adaptation? The efforts of Rozenfel'd's widow to find the corresponding travel notebook, in the hope that there might be something in it, proved unsuccessful. Zhamtsarano himself, it was explained, was dead, his archive gone. Students? Professor Rinchen, a doctor of linguistics, was said to have been the closest to him. And, at last, I got a reply from him in Ulan Bator. "Yes," wrote Rinchen, "you are not mistaken. I am indeed the last man left alive who knows all the details of the interrupted researches of the esteemed Professor Zhamtsarano into the Mongolian Almases. I also know all the details of Professor Baradiin's sighting which were never published. The last conversation I had with him about this was in Leningrad in 1936."

Everything that I managed to gather about the traveller B. B. Baradiin's discovery (he was an eminent Soviet Orientalist) I later published in the following words:

> It happened in April 1906 in the Alashan desert, at the spot known as Badyn Jaran. One evening not long before sunset, when the caravan had to stop for the night, the caravan leader suddenly gave a startled cry. The caravan stopped and everyone looked at the figure of a hairy man, like an ape, on a sandy mound. Stooping, with long arms dangling, he stood on a ridge of sand, lit by the rays of the setting sun. For a minute he looked at the people, then turned and disappeared among the mounds. Baradiin asked the drivers to go after him. No-one made the attempt, except a Lama from Urga accompanying the caravan, Shirab the Hoarse, a first-class athlete. He tried to set off in pursuit of the Almas, as the Mongolians call this creature, intending to tackle him and overcome him. But in his heavy Mongolian boots Shirab could not catch up with the Almas, who swiftly disappeared over a ridge. This invaluable sighting of Baradiin's evoked lively interest in educated Russian circles. However, the discussion was purely verbal. In the account of his journey published in 1908, Baradiin was obliged to omit this event at the insistence of the head of the Imperial Geographical Society and Permanent Secretary of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, S. F. Ol'denburg, "to avoid embarrassment." In this way, conservative official science buried this noteworthy discovery for a long time . . .

Nonetheless the seed was not lost. Baradiin told his friend Zhamtsarano of the event, and also said that his Mongolian travelling companions considered a meeting with an Almas to be about as rare as a meeting with a wild horse or yak. For many years, Zhamtsarano prepared for an expedition. But to where, and with what aim? According to Rinchen, Zhamtsarano questioned a multitude of Mongolians. Every instance of a meeting with an Almas from the end of the Nineteenth Century to 1928 was noted on a special map. "Also," writes Rinchen, "we noted in the margin the names of our informants, for the most part caravanners and nomadic monks who traversed these places and heard or saw these strange creatures or their tracks." Data relating to the observations were noted. Zhamtsarano also devised the following approach: each witness would describe the appearance of the Almas, and Mongolian Science Committee artist Soyoltai, a researcher present at the interview, would sketch a color picture of it. In this way, a large sheaf of pictures, forming a sort of composite portrait, was built up. Alas, neither sketches nor the map have come down to us. The Mongolian Academician Dorji Meiren, who collaborated in the research, summarised the main results . . .

In 1937 the last tongues of this premature flame in Mongolia flickered and died. The actors disappeared one by one (Porshnev 1968, IV: 101–103).

One short confirmatory note about Badzar Baradiin occurs in Rinchen's first article:

> In 1936, Professor Baradiin asked me in Leningrad whether his companion Sharab [*sic*] the Hoarse, who tried to chase and catch the Almas, was still alive. The Professor regretted not having taken a picture of the Almas, and that this had prevented his noting his wonderful meeting with the wild inhabitant of the sand dunes of Badyn Jaran in his report (Rinchen 1958: 35).

In the main passage quoted above, we have the basic description of the nature of Zhamtsarano's work on the Almas, and of the event which awoke his interest. The account can be summarized as follows: Baradiin saw an Almas while travelling in the Alashan desert. He was prevented from publishing the fact himself, but reported it to Zhamtsarano, who began investigating the subject, and compiled a map and pictures. However, Zhamtsarano's archive is now "gone." The word used for "gone" ("propal") can mean either that the archive has disappeared or that it is known to have been destroyed. In *The Current Position with Regard to Relict Hominoids,* Porshnev (1963: 37) uses a slightly different phrase: "is not available to us."

Why did the flame "flicker and die" in 1937? The answer is to be found in the political history of Mongolia and the Soviet Union. Zhamtsarano was not a native of Mongolia proper. He was, like Baradiin, a Buryat Mongol, coming from the same district as Baradiin. The local administration in Buryatia allocated funds on the same day for both of them to go to university (Tudenova 1969: 142). Despite, or perhaps because of, his Buryat background, Zhamtsarano rose to occupy an important position in the new Mongolian People's Republic, being instrumental in founding the Mongolian Science Committee (forerunner of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences), and becoming its first Secretary (Rupen 1964, I: 204–206).

In 1932, he was ordered to return to Leningrad, where he spent his last years working at the Institute of Oriental Studies. He had long had a close connection with the Institute. The manuscript material collected on his many expeditions between 1903 and 1930 was deposited in the Manuscript Department of the Institute, and he continued to deposit manuscripts there up to 1936. These were not his personal papers, but Mongolian manuscripts from monasteries and other places, copied, bought, or otherwise acquired by Zhamtsarano on his travels. In Leningrad, however, his views were apparently still thought to be too "bourgeois-nationalist," and in 1937 he was arrested. He died while in prison. The date is not certain, but it was most probably in 1940. This is the year of death written beneath his picture in the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies today. Badzar Baradiin suffered the same fate, disappearing in 1937.

What happened to Zhamtsarano's archive, his own papers? In 1963, Porshnev said it was "not available," and in the political circumstances of the

time this was quite true. But Porshnev's search had been carried out in 1958. In the early 1960's came the Soviet thaw, and many who had disappeared in the Stalinist era suddenly became mentionable again. A conference celebrating the eightieth anniversary of Zhamtsarano's birth took place in Buryatia, and a rehabilitatory article appeared (Baldanzhapov 1962, Tsibikov 1962).

Porshnev does not seem to have been aware of these developments. Rinchen, however, plays a more enigmatic role. Although Zhamtsarano was still a "non-person" in 1958, Rinchen knew at that time precisely what had happened to Zhamtsarano's archive. He examined the calendar of the archive and some of the documents in it in January, 1958, and published a description of the archive in June, 1959 (Rinchen 1959). This brought the wrath of the Soviet authorities down upon him, and he was denounced for making unauthorized use of the archive (Rupen 1964, I: 256). It seems strange that he should not have told Porshnev of the existence of the archive. (An immediate consequence of Rinchen's action in publishing an attack on the Soviet Union for keeping the archive, and listing its contents, was that the entire collection was re-sorted and re-numbered, rendering the list obsolete.)

Zhamtsarano's papers are preserved as collection no. 62 of the Archive of Orientalists in the Leningrad Section of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Rinchen's list of its contents reveals how it reached the Archive:

> 104. Lists of Ts. Zh. Zhamtsarano's materials compiled by L. Puchkovskii, original and typescript; also the decree of April 21, 1938, on the receipt of Zhamtsarano's other materials by the Manuscript Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies (Rinchen 1959: 205).

In 1938, of course, Zhamtsarano was in prison, if not already dead. It would seem, therefore, that all his working papers were confiscated after his arrest and handed over to the Institute. When, thirty years later, Zhamtsarano's edition of Mongolian laws was published from materials in the collection, the editor, S. D. Dylykov, noted that "all of Zhamtsarano's scholarly materials are to be found in a complete state of preservation in the manuscript collection of the Institute" (Khalkha Dzhirum 1965: 7n). This statement is not entirely correct. Some of Zhamtsarano's papers are kept in the Institute of Social Sciences of the Buryat Branch of the Siberian Section of the Academy of Sciences at Ulan-Ude. But the limiting dates of that collection are 1890–1917, and Zhamtsarano's work on the Almas lasted at least until 1928 (Lichnye arkhivnye fondy . . . 1962, I: 261). Tudenova (1969: 138) states that the collection was handed over by Baradiin in the 1930's, and that the limiting dates are 1890–1909.

In September, 1982, I was privileged to be allowed to study the Zhamtsarano collection at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad. Although

I was not able to examine every item in the collection, there are no maps in it other than a collection of historical maps compiled by Grumm-Grzhimailo; and no sketches of Almases. Nor is there any evidence in his diaries or collected materials that he collected tales about the Almas. Admittedly, these materials are incomplete, but they include his diary and materials from his trip to eastern and southern Mongolia in 1909–10, when we might expect him to have been interested in the Almas (AV MSa,b). It may be that, on returning to Leningrad in 1932, Zhamtsarano left part of his collection in Mongolia, and only took with him the materials on which he wished to work in Leningrad. In general, there is very little in the collection from the 1920's and the early 1930's. Most of the material dates from the first fifteen years of the century, and from the mid-1930's when he had returned to Leningrad.

One interesting item which *is* preserved in Leningrad is the letter which Baradiin wrote to Zhamtsarano on returning from the expedition on which he is said to have seen the Almas (AV MSc). Baradiin had set off to travel to Urga in 1905, spending some time at the court of the Dalai Lama, who had taken refuge at Van-Kuren in Mongolia; then returning to Urga in March, 1906, to travel to Gumbum and Lavran in north-eastern Tibet, which he reached in June, 1906. In January, 1907, he set off on the return journey, and reached his home, Aga, in Buryatia, in May, 1907. On July 17, 1907, he wrote to Zhamtsarano from Aga. He gives the main impressions of his journey: The collection of books and manuscripts; how he was threatened by a large crowd while taking pictures of a religious ceremony; how he "made the wearisome journey across the endless Gobi" on the return journey. He gives Zhamtsarano news of his family. If he saw an Almas, it does not warrant mention in the letter.

The absence of a mention of the Almas in Baradiin's published account was explained by Porshnev as arising from pressure from Ol'denburg. In the published account, the entire journey from Urga to Lavran is sketched only in the barest outline, covering only one page of text (Baradiin 1908: 196–97). However, as Baradiin met his eventual end in much the same way and at much the same time as Zhamtsarano, it is not entirely surprising to find that his archive is also preserved in the Archive of Orientalists. It is collection no. 87 of the Archive.

Among the Baradiin papers are the diaries of his journey to Lavran and back. The diaries of his return journey illustrate his method of working. First, there are the actual diaries, written day by day while in Lavran, and covering the start of the return journey (AV MSe). On his return to Aga, Baradiin rewrote the diaries, adding at appropriate places long and detailed discourses on particular aspects of events, places and people encountered on his journey (AV MSd). Nothing from the original diary was omitted and much was added. This formed the rough draft for a final full manuscript report (AV MSf). For the outward journey we do not have the actual diaries,

but we do have the written-up diaries in their rough form, comprising over 321 pages of closely written text, on foolscap paper (AV MSg). The journey described on one page of printed text occupies 128 pages of the manuscript. Each day Baradiin notes the distance covered, the nature and usually the name of the stopping place, and records every event of the slightest interest in great detail. Meticulous attention is paid to recording animals seen and persons met. The diary was written up immediately on Baradiin's return to Aga, before he could consult with Ol'denburg or anyone else: the preface is signed, and dated "Aga. 1907.VIII.5(n.s.)" (p. 11).

Baradiin left Urga on March 29, 1906 (p. 175), reaching the borders of Alashan on April 18 (p. 221). The approximate route of his travels is shown in Fig. 1. A gale blew during the first two days of his journey across the Alashan desert. On April 19 Baradiin wrote:

> With the greatest difficulty we managed only five versts from the well from which we had just replenished our water, and stopped for the night before we had escaped the mountain ridge, at a spot called Alag Usu (there was a well there once, but not any more). The hurricane raged as before (p. 223).

On April 21 he wrote:

> Up to now we had not seen a single living soul for a whole week, but today we spotted a herd of camels at the head of a watercourse, which signalled the presence of human habitation nearby (p. 229).

On April 27, the caravan reached the camp of the Alashanian guides, where they remained until May 3 (pp. 233–37). From there, they proceeded without further incident to the capital of Alashan, Alasha-yamyn', reaching it on May 8 (pp. 237–41). They left Alasha-yamyn' for Gumbum on May 14, reaching the southern border of Alashan on May 24 (pp. 252–58).

At this point in the written-up diary, Baradiin breaks off the daily account to give a "General note on Alashan" (pp. 259–80). He describes the wildlife in detail:

> As soon as the heat of summer arrives, hordes of lizards and snakes (a species of grass snake) appear. Poisonous scorpions can also be seen hiding under slabs of stone. There are several species of swarming insects, beetles and ants, among which the golden ant is particularly noteworthy. But, in general, Alashan is rather poor in different species of insects, thanks to the sparseness of the vegetation. Wild animals are represented by wolves and foxes, and there are small rodents and hares. There are no marmots, whose area of distribution ended while I was still travelling through the Northern half of Khalkha-Mongolia. There is game: wild sheep, "argali," shelter in the rocky mountains; zerens and steppe gazelles on the steppe belts. In the Alashan Ula mountains can be found the beautiful "blue goat." There are hazel-grouse, and geese and ducks on the lakes in summer (p. 261).

Baradiin nowhere relates that he saw an Almas. The supposed sighting took place in the Alashan desert in April of 1906. As we have seen, this effectively limits the sighting to the period April 19–27. The germ of the

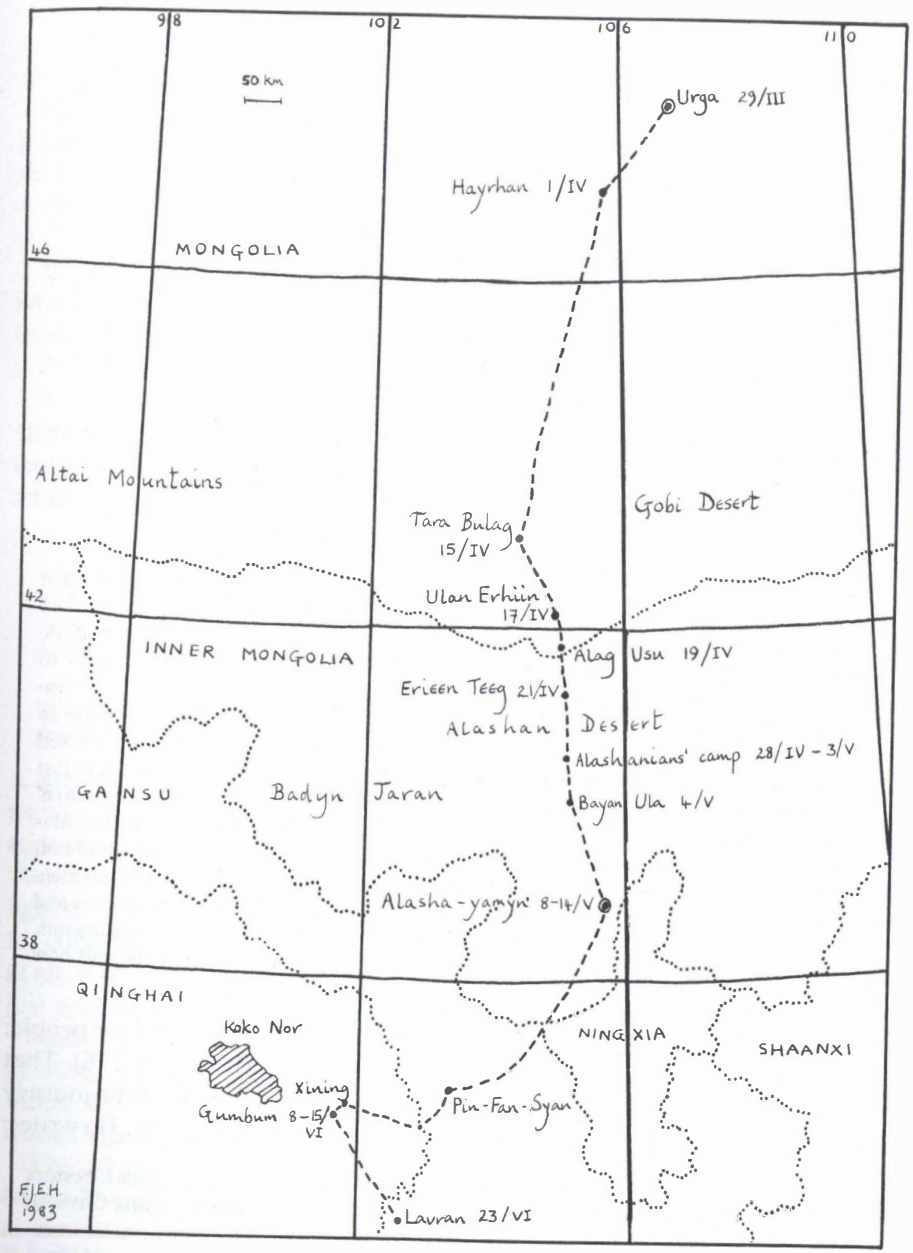

FIGURE 1. Baradiin's journey from Urga to Lavran, 1906

story may lie in a curious note Baradiin makes in the diary entry for April 21:

> The spot where we found a camp with a well was called Erieen teeg. It seems that people live even among these sandy dunes. The point is that these dunes represent a sandy layer above soil, and not a sandy stratum on bedrock. And so between the dunes a healthy earth soil can be seen, beneath which water can be found at a depth of about thirty feet. Yellow clumps of the thick local scrub (dzag) serve as excellent food for camels and sheep and goats, so attracting the local nomads to stop there at the right time of year with their animals. Our Alashanians told us that in the sandy regions of Alashan, especially its Western half, there are sizable oases with brackish and sometimes even fresh water lakes with splendid pastures. Alashanians live with their herds very wealthily in these oases, which are lost in the most inaccessible depths of wide expanses of sand, and so successfully avoid the persecutions of the authorities, and heavy taxes and duties. The people of these places are very wild and avoid the outside world, they say (p. 226).

Shirab the Hoarse is supposed to have been on the caravan. No such person is mentioned in Baradiin's narrative. He set out on his expedition with his brother Zhap and Demzhin Namzhilai (p. 11), and it is clear from his description of events in Urga that no Lamas joined them:

> March 15–22. The time of our departure from Urga for Tangutia depended on when the first Alashanians arrived in Urga with camels carrying millet. In view of this, we asked daily about Alashanians. We found out that some Alashanians would arrive in a few days, who would take four or five days to sell their millet and set off on the return journey to their native Alashan. In Urga we found two fellow-countrymen, Lamas, who were also en route to Tangutia. We became acquainted and agreed to travel together, the more so as one of them was a man who had travelled to Tangutia before. In view of this, we asked our experienced countryman to conduct negotiations with the Alashanians who had just arrived about how much they would require to take us on their camels to Alasha-yamyn' (Fu-ma-fu). This was not so easy a matter for novices ignorant of the ways of the Alashanians. But it turned out that the Alashanians who had arrived first in Urga could not, with the number of camels they had, take us all, and could only take our countrymen. To our great disappointment, our companions hired the Alashanians for themselves and had to leave before us. But our turn came to hire drivers from newly arrived Alashanians. By now, I already knew how to conduct negotiations with these Mongolians, and how much they would want in order to take us (pp. 173–74).

Baradiin later mentions that the Alashanian party consisted of four people: the caravan-leader, his nine-year-old son, and two employees (p. 176). That Baradiin had only his two Buryat companions on the first part of the journey is confirmed when he leaves Alasha-yamyn' on a new camel train. He writes:

> Now we were a regular company, fourteen strong in all. Our new companions, besides the three Buryats from Dooramba Gonchon already mentioned, and the Lama Gavesan with the young monk Gonbo, were the entire family of a rich pilgrim Lama from Uzumchi [*sic*—M. H.]. The head of the family was a middle-aged man, a happy, well-dressed Lama . . . with two wives . . . a thirteen-year-old girl . . . two more employees of his younger brother, a young Khalkha Mongol (pp. 252–53).

This lists eleven companions, with Baradiin and his two Buryat companions making up the fourteen. There is no room for Shirab.

Where did Shirab come from? He first appears in Mikhail Rozenfel'd's novel *The Ravine of the Almases,* an adventure story of anti-Soviet intrigue in which the Almases serve merely to get the heroes out into the desert. They are revealed at the end, almost as an afterthought, as barbarized Chinese peasants whose ancestors had fled to the mountains to escape a cruel overlord three hundred years before. Rozenfel'd's book first appeared in 1936 (Rozenfel'd 1936), and was reprinted several times in the 1950's and 1960's (Rozenfel'd 1955, 1957a, 1957b, 1962).

Porshnev is guilty of a slight inaccuracy in saying that Zhamtsarano is named in the novel: the Zhamtsarano character in the novel is called Dzhambon. To find Zhamtsarano, Porshnev had to go to Rozenfel'd's earlier 1931 book (not 1930 as stated by Porshnev), the travelogue *By Car through Mongolia* (Rozenfel'd 1931), in which Rozenfel'd relates several experiences which were later incorporated into his novel. The deeds of Shirab in the novel are as related by Porshnev, but in the travelogue the story is somewhat simpler:

> In 1906, Professor Baradin was travelling with a caravan on the sands of Oloshan. One evening, shortly before sunset, when it was already time to stop for the night, the caravan leader looked at a hillock and suddenly let out a cry of fear. The caravan stopped and everyone saw on a sandy knoll the figure of a hairy man, like an ape. He stood on a ridge of sand, illuminated by the rays of the setting sun.
>
> For a minute the Almas looked at the people, but noticing that the caravan had seen him, disappeared among the hillocks. Baradin asked them to chase him, but none of the guides ventured to do so (Rozenfel'd 1931: 73).

A Shirab did, however, accompany Rozenfel'd and Zhamtsarano on their travels in *By Car through Mongolia*: he was an ex-Lama who had been converted to work for the new Mongolia. It seems clear that Rozenfel'd "borrowed" this Shirab to add color to the story of Baradiin's Almas. In the light of this, Baradiin's query of 1936 as reported by Rinchen, as to whether his companion Shirab was still alive, takes on a new meaning. If it happened at all, it was clearly a joking reference to the *fictionalized* account which had just appeared that very year in Rozenfel'd's novel.

Rozenfel'd is also the first to mention Badyn Jaran. Although place names in Mongolia tend to recur frequently, Baradiin does not mention Badyn Jaran. Badyn Jaran is an area of the Alashan desert which is on a direct line from Urga to Lavran, but Baradiin's route took him 150 miles east of it.

The oft-repeated tale of how Baradiin saw an Almas and so inspired his friend Zhamtsarano to conduct a long-term research project appears to have at its base some rather shaky foundations. Of the two main elements in Baradiin's encounter, the sighting and the pursuit, the pursuit is fictitious and the sighting itself in grave doubt. It is inconceivable that in a diary of such comprehensiveness, conceived as a complete record of events, describing a monotonous journey across the desert, an incident of such a startling nature should go unrecorded. The merest hint is given of "wild people" in

the desert, and while it may just be possible that Baradiin recorded the legend of the secluded Alashanians of the western half of the desert as a direct consequence of a sighting, it seems much more likely that the tale of the sighting is an elaboration of the vaguer tales of "wild people" in the desert. The absence of any mention of the sighting in Baradiin's letter to Zhamtsarano on his return to Buryatia is another, albeit negative, indication that the encounter did not take place.

The role of Rinchen in Porshnev's research of the late 1950's and early 1960's remains a problem. Rinchen knew of the existence of the Zhamtsarano archive. Why did he not tell Porshnev that the collection was in Leningrad? Was it because he believed, as he wrote in his description of the collection, that the Soviet Union had no right to it? He did not actually see most of the collection, and would have been unwise to presume that the map and sketches were not there. And is his account of his meeting with Baradiin in 1936 deliberately misleading, or did Rinchen himself misunderstand Baradiin?

Whatever the foundations of Mongolian Almas research, the shakiness of part does not bring the whole edifice tumbling down. Although Zhamtsarano's map and sketches are not in his major collection in Leningrad, there is nothing to suggest that they did not at some stage exist, and may exist still. In addition to Rinchen's testimony, Porshnev apparently had the testimony of Dorji Meiren. There are no grounds for doubting Rinchen's word about his own researches, or the word of other Mongolian researchers. Porshnev may have been unwise to relate "evidence" at third and even fourth hand, but the mass of other evidence for the Almas, adduced by him and others, is not thereby invalidated.

My visit to Leningrad was undertaken under the terms of an exchange agreement between the British Academy and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The help and support provided by both sponsoring and receiving institutions is gratefully acknowledged, as is the generosity of the Curators of the Bodleian Library in allowing me study leave to accomplish the visit.

References Cited

Baldanzhapov, P.
1962 80-letie so dnya rozhdeniya Ts. Zh. Zhamtsarano. *Narody Azii i Afriki,* Vol. I: 217.

Baradiin, Badzar
1908 Puteshestvie v Lavran. *Izvestiya Imperatorskogo Rossiiskogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva,* Vol. XLIV, iv: 183–232.

Démentiev, G., and D. Zevegmid
1960 Une Note sur l'Homme des Neiges en Mongolie. *La Terre et la Vie,* Vol. 4: 194–99.

Heuvelmans, Bernard, and Boris F. Porchnev
1974 *L'Homme de Néanderthal est Toujours Vivant.* Paris: Plon.

Khalkha Dzhirum
1965 *Khalkha Dzhirum.* Svodnyi Tekst i Perevod Ts. Zh. Zhamtsarano. Podgotovka Teksta k Izdaniyu . . . S. D. Dylykova. Moskva: Nauka.

Lichnye Arkhivnye Fondy . . .
1962 *Lichnye Arkhivnye Fondy v Gosudarstvennykh Khranilishchakh SSSR.* Moskva.

Maidar, Damdinzhavin
1981 *Pamyatniki Istorii i Kul'tury Mongolii,* VIII. Moskva: Mysl'.

Montagu, Ivor
1964 The Wild Man of the Gobi. *Animals,* Vol. 3: 84–88, 92.

Porshnev, Boris F.
1963 *Sovremennoe Sostoyanie Voprosa o Reliktovykh Gominoidakh.* Moskva: VINITI.

Porshnev, Boris F.
1968 Bor'ba za Trogloditov. *Prostor,* Vol. IV: 98–112; Vol. V: 76–101; Vol. VI: 108–121; Vol. VII: 109–27.

Porshnev, Boris F., and A. A. Shmakov (eds.)
1958 *Informatsionnye Materialy Komissii po Izucheniyu Voprosa o "Snezhnom Cheloveke."* Vol. I–IV. Moskva, 1958–59, Vol. I: 6–11; Vol. II: 6–7; Vol. III: 9–16.

Rinchen
1958 Almas—Mongol'skii Rodich Snezhnogo Cheloveka. *Sovremennaya Mongoliya,* Vol. 5: 34–38.

Rinchen
1959 L'Héritage Scientifique du Prof. Żamcarano. *Central Asiatic Journal,* Vol. IV(3): 199–206.

Rinchen
1964 Almas still exists in Mongolia. *Genus,* Vol. 20: 186–192.

Rozenfel'd, M. K.
1931 *Na Avtomobile po Mongolii.* [Moscow]: Molodaya Gvardiya.

Rozenfel'd, M. K.
1936 *Ushchel'e Almasov.* [Moscow]: Molodaya Gvardiya.

Rozenfel'd, M. K.
1955 *Ushchel'e Almasọv.* Moskva: Detgiz.

Rozenfel'd, M. K.
1957a *Ushchel'e Almasov.* Barnaul: Altaiskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo.

Rozenfel'd, M. K.
1957b V Ushchel'e Almasov. *Izbrannoe,* Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel': 293–379.

Rozenfel'd, M. K.
1962 *Ushchel'e Almasov.* Kemerovo: Knizhnoe izdatel'stvo.

Rupen, R. A.
1964 *Mongols of the Twentieth Century.* Uralic and Altaic Series, 37. Indiana University, Bloomington.

Shackley, Myra
1980 *Neanderthal Man.* London: Duckworth.

Shackley, Myra
1982 The Case for Neanderthal Survival: Fact, Fiction or Faction? *Antiquity,* Vol. LVI: 31–41.

Tchernine, Odette
1970 *The Yeti.* London: Hale.

Tsibikov, B. D.
1962 Tsyben Zhamtsarano. *Trudy Buryatskogo Kompleksnogo Nauchno-Issledovatel'skogo Instituta,* Vol. 10: 121–40.

Tudenova, T. Ts.
1969 O fonde Ts. Zh. Zhamtsarano. *Trudy BION BF SO AN SSSR,* 12 = *Materialy po Istorii i Filologii Tsentral'noi Azii,* Vol. 4: 138–42.

Vlček, E.
1959 Old Literary Evidence for the Existence of the "Snow Man" in Tibet and Mongolia. *Man,* 203.

Vlček, E.
1960 Correspondence. *Man,* 33, 194.

MANUSCRIPTS

Archive of Orientalists of the Leningrad Section of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (Arkhiv Vostokovedov Leningradskogo Otdeleniya Instituta Vostokovedeniya Akademii Nauk SSSR: abbreviated AV).

MSa Fond 62, op. I, ed. khr. 18: Materialy puteshestviya po Vostochnoi i Yuzhnoi Mongolii 1909–10 gg.

MSb Fond 62, op. I, ed. khr. 44: Dnevnik, 1909–10.

MSc Fond 62, op. II, ed. khr. 2: Pis'mo ot B. B. Baradina.

MSd Fond 87, op. I, ed. khr. 29: Dnevnik puteshestviya po Amdo (9 iyunya 1906 g.—23 yanvarya 1907 g.).

MSe Fond 87, op. I, ed. khr. 30: Dnevnik B. Baradiina. Lavran. 11 iyunya 1906 g.—22 yanvarya 1907 g.

MSf Fond 87, op. I, ed. khr. 31: Zhizn' v tangutskom monastyre Lavran. Dnevnik buddiiskogo palomnika v 1906–1907 gg.

MSg Fond 87, op. I, ed. khr. 32: Amdo-Mongoliya. Dnevnik puteshestviya buddiiskogo palomnika-buryata po Khalkha-Mongolii, Alashani i severo-vostochnoi okraine Tibete-Amdo. [The pagination of this volume is erroneous: pp. 160–79 are repeated in succession. All potentially ambiguous references cited are in fact to the second sequence.]